and machinery and technical civil work subject to a maximum of Rs. 4 crores; and for expansion/modernization to the extent of 50 per cent subject to a maximum of Rs. 1.00 crore.

Problem of cattle food

*76. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems faced by agriculturists owning cattle farms due to the shortage of cattle food like grass etc. whenever the country is affected by natural calamaties like floods and drought; and

(b) if so, the details of remedies proposed by Government to save the poor agriculturists from this crisis?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government takes a number of remedial actions like release of funds from the CRF/NCCF, facilitation of transport of fodder by Railways, relief to cattle camps, collection and dissemination of information on availability and requirement of fodder, distribution of fodder seeds minikits, liaison with cattle feed manufacturers, NDDB, State Governments etc. The Department has also released fund for the establishment of fodder banks.

Accident of Rajdhani Express

*77. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE :
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a rail accident took place on the fateful night of 9th September, 2002 when the Delhi bound Rajdhani Express plunged into a river near Gaya;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the number of people who died/were injured in this accident, the compensation paid to dependents of the deceased and injured;

(c) whether any inquiry was ordered to investigate the reasons of the accident; if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the enquiry report has since been received; if so, the findings thereof; and

(e) the action proposed to be taken in this regard and to eliminate recurrence of such accidents?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) and (b) On 9.9.2002, 2301 Up Howrah – New Delhi Rajdhani Express derailed at Howrah end of approach of Bridge No.445 at 22.39 hrs. between Rafiganj and Deo Road Stations at Km. 508/19-21 on Gaya-Mughalsarai broad gauge double line electrified section of Mughalsarai Division.

First 4 coaches derailed and fell down the bank at the Delhi end of the bridge. The next 4 coaches remained piled up on one another in the river bed in span No.5. One coach was lying near Pier 4. 2 coaches were infringing the Down line. 3 coaches were lying in spans No.1 ,to 3. 15th coach capsized near Howrah end abutment. In the 16th coach leading trolley was derailed and its trailing trolley was on the rails. 17th and 18th were on the rails.

As a result of the accident, 107 persons lost their lives (including 22 Railway staff), 60 sustained grievous injuries and 105 simple injuries.

Compensation Claims for train accidents are decided by the Railway Claims Tribunal. As on 13.11.2002, 72 Claims cases have been filed in Railway Claims Tribunal, Patna for death and injuries. Compensation shall be arranged soon after the claims cases are decreed by the Tribunal. The claimant can also apply to other benches, covering places where he purchased ticket or where he normally resides or the destination.

An enhanced 'ex-gratia' of Rs. 1 lakh for those dead, Rs. 25000 for the grievously injured and Rs. 5000 to those having simple injuries, was announced. Rs 1,07,00,500 have been paid as ex-gratia in 217 cases of death and injury by 15.11.2002.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Commissioner of Railway Safety/Eastern Circle has conducted the statutory inquiry into this accident.

Commissioner of Railway Safety/Eastern Circule has attributed the accident to "Opening of fish Plates and elastic rail clips of the cess side single rail in Howrah end approach of bridge No. 445 by miscreants." He has classified the accident under the category of "Sabotage".

He has fixed the primary responsibility with the 'unknown' persons, who willfully tampered with the track with the intent of causing harm to the travelling public and damage to the Railway property.

(e) Following steps are being taken to prevent probability of similar accidents caused by "Sabotage" :—

(i) Instructions have been issued to reduce the number of fish plated joints, wherever feasible and for burring of two fish bolts, one on each rail, at joints located in the stretches considered vulnerable.

(ii) Efforts are also being made to develop an anti-theft elastic rail clip and fish bolt fastening.

(iii) Close liaison is being maintained with State Police Departments, wherever required for prevention of crime of such types on Railway tracks and bridges.

(iv) Comprehensive safety drives are conducted covering various aspects of safe passage of trains, involving cross sections of inspectors, supervisors and officers.

Fall in Kharif production

*78. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the news-item which appeared in the 'Economic Times', dated 25th September, 2002, titled "Kharif grain production may fall 18 per cent to 90.8 m. tonne";

(b) what is the current estimate of foodgrains and oil seeds production in this Kharif season and the measures initiated by Government to tide over the crisis in case of shortfall; and

(c) the relief provided to the affected farmers?